

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9139

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC HOLOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 4357

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VN, VS, CB, MILI

SUBJ: JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE ON INDOCHINA

REF: TOKYO 3900

SUMMARY: MEDIA AND GOJ ARE INTENSELY INTERESTED IN UNFOLDING
DRAMA IN INDOCHINA, EXPECTING QUICK COLLAPSE OF GOVTS IN PHNOM
PENH AND SAIGON, UNLESS US, MIRACULOUSLY, HALTS FIGHTING FOR
POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. PLIGHT OF REFUGEES IS MAJOR FOCUS, AND
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GOJ IS SEEKING WAYS TO MODIFY GRANTS AND LOANS IN PIPELINE TO

SAIGON FOR REFUGEE RELIEF AND TO ALLOCATE ADDITIONAL FUNDS DIRECTLY FOR REFUGEES. PRIMARY CONCERN IS DESTABILIZING AFFECTS OF NEW INDOCHINA SITUATION AND NEW POLITICAL/MILITARY EQUATION WHICH WILL EMERGE IN THE WAKE OF CURRENT EVENTS. GOJ, PARTICULARLY FONMIN MIYAZAWA THROUGH TALKS WITH SECY KISSINGER WANTS TO FORMULATE NEW INDOCHINA POLICY IN CONCERT WITH US AND ASEAN NATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. INDOCHINESE DEVELOPMENTS DOMINATE TOKYO'S MEDIA AND CONVERSATIONS IN GOVERNMENTAL AND DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES, FOCUSING ON NVN'S BLITZ DOWN SOUTH VIETNAMESE COAST TOWARD SAIGON, COLLAPSE OF LON NOL'S ADMINISTRATION, THIEU'S RAPIDLY DETERIORATING POSITION AND THE SEEMING POLITICAL VACUUM IN SAIGON, AND THE PLIGHT OF REFUGEES. SYMPATHY FOR REFUGEES, AND CONCERN FOR JAPAN'S IMAGE ABROAD, HAVE LED FONMIN MIYAZAWA TO BEGIN URGENT DELIBERATIONS TO FIND FUNDS TO ASSIST. IN ADDITION TO THE SEVEN BILLION YEN (\$24 MIL) GRANT APPROVED BY CABINET LAST WEEK, AN ADDITIONAL NINE BILLION YEN (\$31 MIL) COMMODITY LOAN AGREEMENT IS EXPECTED TO BE SIGNED THIS WEEK. PART OF LOAN AND GRANT FUNDS CAN BE DIVERTED TO HUMANITARIAN REFUGEE RELIEF, WHICH, MIYAZAWA TOLD THE DIET, WOULD BE OBJECTIVE OF JAPAN'S ASSISTANCE TO SVN. IN ADDITION, THE GOJ PLANS TO PROVIDE THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS FIVE HUNDRED MILLION YEN IN CASH TO AID SVN'S REFUGEES. THE GOJ IS ALSO DESPATCHING FORMER AMB TO VIETNAM NAKAYAMA TO SAIGON IMMEDIATELY AS STAND-IN ENVOY UNTIL JUST-NAMED AMB HITOMI REACHES SAIGON IN MID-APRIL.

2. IN ASSESSING THE STARTLING DEVELOPMENTS IN SVN, MANY KNOWLEDGEABLE JAPANESE BELIEVE US POPULAR AND CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES MAY HAVE TRIGGERED TIMING NVN'S OFFENSIVE AND FEEL THAT EVENTUALLY THE LIBERATION FORCES AND HANOI WOULD HAVE INEVITABLY PREVAILED IN INDOCHINA. NEVERTHELESS, MOST OBSERVERS JUDGE PRES THIEU'S "STRATEGIC RETREAT" AS A COLLOSSAL BLUNDER WHICH IS BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE OF CARDS. PARIS PEACE ACCORDS ARE WRITTEN OFF, FOR EXAMPLE BY MAINICHI, AS "NOT WORTH PAPER WRITTEN ON." JAPANESE ARE VERY SCEPTICAL THAT GVN AND ARVN CAN SUCCESSFULLY CONSTRUCT VIABLE DEFENSE FOR SAIGON AND MILITARY REGIONS III AND IV AND EXPECT AN IMMINENT ATTACK ON SAIGON.

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3. SOLE HOPE FOR SALVAGING ANY GVN POSITION IS STILL ASCRIBED TO US. FONMIN MIYAZAWA PUBLICLY RULED OUT LIKELIHOOD OF US MILITARY INTERVENTION BUT JAPANESE STILL HOPE US WILL TRY THROUGH DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WITH MOSCOW, PEKING, AND HANOI TO HALT FIGHTING AND STRIVE FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION IN SPIRIT, AT LEAST, OF PARIS ACCORDS. MAINICHI JOINED YOMIURI IN OPPOSING FURTHER MILITARY AID TO THIEU'S GOVT, WHICH IN YOMIURI'S

WORDS WOULD "FURTHER TARNISH US PRESTIGE." PRESS AT LEAST HAS CONCLUDED THAT WAVE OF FUTURE IN INDOCHINA IS WITH "LIBERATION FORCES" AS GRUNK AND PRG ARE NOW REFERRED TO, AND AREA IS EXPECTED TO MOVE TO "NEUTRALIST" OR AT LEAST SEMI-COMMUNIST SYSTEM WITH A NEW BALANCE OF FORCES IN SE ASIA. BOLSTERING THIS CONCLUSION, ASAHI EXPLAINS THAT US ENTERED INDOCHINA FRAY AS PART OF CONFRONTATION WITH THE PRC AND THAT RATIONALE IS NO LONGER VALID, ASAHI ALSO CONCLUDED THAT EVENTS IN INDOCHINA SUPPORT THESIS THAT "SOLE RELIANCE ON US IS NO LONGER THE BASIS OF A WORKABLE FOREIGN POLICY." CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION ARE EXPECTED TO INCREASE THEIR INFLUENCE IN SE ASIA, BUT COMMENTATORS HERE THINK HANOI WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY THE TWO OFF AGAINST EACH OTHER AND TRY TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH THE THIRD WORLD.

4. WHILE CAUTIOUS ON THE UNFOLDING SITUATION IN INDOCHINA, ESPECIALLY REGARDING FUTURE RELATIONS WITH SVN, FONMIN MIYAZAWA TOLD DIET THAT IF A NEW GOVT WERE ESTABLISHED IN PHNOM PENH, HE ASSUMED JAPAN WOULD DEAL WITH THAT GOVT. MIYAZAWA HAS SAID JAPAN WANTS TO FORMULATE INDOCHINA POLICY IN CONSULTATION WITH US AND ASEAN COUNTRIES, AND PRESS HAS HIGHLIGHTED LIKELIHOOD THAT KISSINGER/MIYAZAWA TALKS IN WASHINGTON WILL ALLOW CONCENTRATED DISCUSSION OF INDOCHINA.

5. GOVT ACTIONS AND PRESS COMMENTARY APART, POLITICANS, NEWSMEN, AND OTHER PEOPLE WE HAVE TALKED TO IN RECENT DAYS DISPLAY MOOD OF FATALISM ABOUT AND RESIGNATION TO COMMUNIST SUCCESSES IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. THEY BELIEVE SITUATION IS BEYOND SALVATION AND INDICATE GREAT CONCERN OVER POSSIBILITY THAT US MIGHT INVOLVE ITSELF MILITARILY THEREBY MAKING BAD SITUATION WORSE. BEYOND THAT, THEY ARE, OF COURSE, CONCERNED OVER WILL BEING OF JAPANESE PEOPLE AND BUSINESS CONCERNS IN VIETNAM. DESPITE SUCH VIEWS, HOWEVER, IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT, WITH
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LOCAL ELECTIONS TEN DAYS OFF, MANY JAPANESE POLITICANS ARE PAYING RELATIVELY LITTLE ATTENTION TO SOUTHEAST ASIA DRAMA. THEY WRITE IT OFF AS SOMETHING OVER WHICH THEY HAVE NO CONTROL AND SAY THEY CANNOT MAKE ASSESSMENTS UNTIL SITUATION UNFOLDS FURTHER. THEY ARE, THEREFORE, CONCENTRATING ON DOMESTIC CONCERNS AND LEAVING SE ASIA PROBLEM TO MOFA AND CABINET.

6. FINALLY, ALTHOUGH THE THEME OF UNRELIABILITY OF US COMMITMENTS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR US-JAPAN SECURITY RELATIONS IS STILL DISCUSSED, WE PERCEIVE ANOTHER LARGE THEME WHICH MIGHT COE TO FORE. CONCERN HAS BROADENED OVER DESTABILIZATION OF INDOCHINA, SE ASIA, AND ASIA GENERALLY AS A NEW POLITICAL/MILITARY EQUATION EVOLVES IN THE WAKE OF NON-COMMUNIST INDOCHINA'S COLLAPSE. AND, BENEATH THE SURFACE, WE DETECT FURTHER THE FEELING THAT BECAUSE OF JAPANESE LONGING FOR STABILITY,

THEY MIGHT BE RELIEVED BY A "FINAL SOLUTION" IN INDOCHINA--
EVEN A COMMUNIST ONE--AN AREA WHICH HAS LOOMED SO LARGE IN
US-JAPAN RELATIONS AND SO DEVISIVELY IN JAPAN'S DOMESITC
POLITICS FOR MANY YEARS.
SHOESMITH

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